

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Nancy R. Petrey,
Newport Plain Talk co-publisher.

WHEREAS, it was with much sadness and a profound sense of loss that the citizens of Newport and the members of this body learned of the death of one of their community's most valued, loved and respected residents, Nancy R. Petrey, co-publisher of the Newport Plain Talk; and

WHEREAS, born in Wyndale, Virginia, Mrs. Petrey was the daughter of Irene Richmond and William Virgil Rush and graduated from Wallace High School, where she excelled both academically and in extracurricular activities. She was named the Most Outstanding Senior by the James C. Brewer Post of the American Legion and was a very valued member of the basketball team, as captain and as a member of the All-State team; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from high school, Ms. Petrey attended Carson-Newman College, where she met her future husband, Arthur Petrey; and

WHEREAS, they were married in 1952; he worked for the Elizabethton Star and she developed a keen interest in the newspaper business; and

WHEREAS, her three-decade long association with the Plain Talk started in 1960, when her husband became general manager of the then once-a-week, flat-bed press paper; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Petrey worked admirably, during the next decade, in various part-time capacities, while rearing her two daughters and assumed the title of Lifestyles Editor; and

WHEREAS, she held that title until she became general manager of the newspaper, after her husband's death in February, 1981; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Petrey and then news editor David Popiel, who became editor that year, continued operating the newspaper with publisher John M. Jones of Greeneville; she became co-publisher in 1982; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure at the paper, the Plain Talk became a tri-weekly newspaper and won 50 awards in the University of Tennessee-Tennessee Press Association annual contests. Under her expert guidance the paper received five Tennessee Education Association School Bell Awards; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Petrey was a strong supporter of the Tennessee Press Association, serving as a director and officer. In 1989, she was elected as the first woman president of this important group and, with her extraordinary leadership, the association grew; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Jones praised her numerous contributions to the Plain Talk, the Tennessee press and her community, stating, "She was one of the most courageous persons I have ever known, and gifted, with great instinctive ability as a journalist and publisher. Through her ability, her hard work, enterprise, long hours, and knowledge of her community and its people, she earned the warm respect of Tennessee publishers and was a credit to Newport and Cocke County and this newspaper"; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Popiel, who worked closely with her, said, "Few people have put the energy and interest into a career that she did, in helping to make the Plain Talk a highly respected newspaper. She demanded accuracy, fairness, and excellence from the staff and dedicated the newspaper to helping her hometown."; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Petrey was a strong supporter of the Baptist Hospital System of East Tennessee, was a member of the Board of Directors of Baptist Hospital of Cocke County and worked to promote the growth of the hospital. In 1993, she was honored with the prestigious Tennessee Hospital Association State Award; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Petrey also worked tirelessly for the Parents Teachers Association, as its president; Walters State Community College; the University of Tennessee; the

Newport/Cocke County Chamber of Commerce; the Red Cross; the March of Dimes; the Maid of Ramps Festival; Douglas Cooperative; and the American Cancer Association; and

WHEREAS, she is survived by her loving daughters and sons-in-law, Elizabeth (Becky) and John W. Ragsdale, III, of Farragut, and Jeanne and Tom Barry, of Sharpsburg, Georgia; grandsons, John Ragsdale IV and Jordan Lee Ragsdale; and a godson, Josh Buckner; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we pause in our deliberations to reflect on the life of Nancy R. Petrey, a life of purpose, meaning and contribution, and give thanks for her numerous contributions to Newport, Cocke County and Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of Nancy R. Petrey and express our deepest condolences to her family and friends.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared for presentation, with this final clause omitted from such copy.